

BUILDING THE

NEXT GENERATION OF YOUNG FOOTBALL STARS



BY KATIE OGLETREE
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FARES MALDIVES RESORT

MICHAEL OWEN WAS THE PERFECT FOOTBALL MACHINE. THE BOY WONDER FROM CHESTER. LIVERPOOL'S GOLDEN CHILD. ENGLAND'S TEENAGE PHENOMENON. A BALLON D'OR WINNER BEFORE MOST PLAYERS HIT THEIR PEAK. A PLAYER WITH BLISTERING PACE, CLINICAL FINISHING, HEADLINE GOALS, GLOBAL FAME.

Before Owen became a mentor to young players around the world, he was one of the most decorated footballers of his era, a forward whose rise felt almost unreal in its speed. He exploded onto the scene as a teenager at Liverpool F.C., becoming the Premier League's most feared young striker before he was old enough to legally drink in the United States.

By 18, he had already captured global attention with his unforgettable solo goal for England national football team against Argentina at the 1998 FIFA World Cup—a moment still regarded as one of England's greatest World Cup goals.

His trophy cabinet quickly filled up. Owen won the prestigious Ballon d'Or in 2001, officially crowned as the best footballer in the world after a sensational year with Liverpool. That same season, he helped lead the club to a historic cup treble, winning the FA Cup, League Cup, and UEFA Cup. In the FA Cup final against Arsenal, Owen scored twice in the closing minutes to turn defeat into victory, producing one of the defining performances of his career.

Individually, his numbers were relentless. Owen won the Premier League Golden Boot twice, finishing as the league's top scorer in both the 1997–98 and 1998–99 seasons. He would go on to score more than 150 goals for Liverpool and over 40 for England, placing him among the nation's all-time leading scorers.

His career also included spells with some of football's biggest institutions, such as Real Madrid CF, Newcastle United F.C., and Manchester United F.C.—a reflection of how highly he was regarded across Europe at his peak.

A serious turning point came during the 2006 FIFA World Cup, when Owen suffered a devastating knee injury while playing for the England national football team against Sweden. The injury sidelined him for months and marked the beginning of a long physical battle that would follow him for the rest of his career. Hamstring problems, muscle tears, and recurring fitness setbacks became a constant cycle. Even as he moved between major clubs, Owen was no longer the unstoppable teenage phenomenon who once outran entire defenses. What made his decline especially difficult was how early it came. Many footballers begin adjusting their game in their thirties. Owen was forced to reinvent himself while still in his twenties.

In 2013, at just 33 years old, Owen announced his retirement from professional football.

BUT THAT VERSION OF MICHAEL OWEN ONLY TELLS HALF THE STORY.





THROUGH HIS FOOTBALL CAMPS AND YOUTH COACHING APPEARANCES, MICHAEL OWEN HAS EXTENDED HIS INFLUENCE BEYOND HIS PLAYING CAREER AND INTO THE NEXT GENERATION OF THE SPORT.

Because behind the highlight reels and the polished television appearances is a man who has spent much of his life reinventing himself. From football icon to racehorse owner, pundit, entrepreneur, and now mentor to the next generation of players around the world. Long after the roar of packed stadiums faded, Owen quietly found a new role: taking the game that shaped him and bringing it directly to young footballers chasing their own dreams.

Over the past six years, Michael Owen has pivoted his soccer legacy to helping young aspiring soccer players. The camps are designed for kids ages 5 to 13. The last two camps were held in the Maldives, specifically at the Avani+ Fares Maldives Resort. It's four days and combines daily training sessions, skills development and team challenges, led by Michael and assistant coaches. The program ends on a high with a celebratory finale, with certificates, medals and jersey signings for every participant.

But it doesn't have to be all work and no play. In fact, beyond the pitch, younger guests can dip in and out of island adventures at AvaniKids and the Teens Club, with creative arts and crafts and dedicated spaces designed around their age group. Mealtimes are part of the fun too, with Petit Bistro, the resort's kids-only restaurant, created just for younger guests.

Commenting on the 2026 camp, Michael Owen said, "Coming back to Avani+ Fares Maldives feels like a natural next step after the energy and enthusiasm we saw at the first camp. It is a special environment for families and the camp is all about helping kids build confidence, develop their skills and most importantly enjoy the game together."

Through his football camps and youth coaching appearances, Michael Owen has extended his influence beyond his playing career and into the next generation of the sport. While his camps are smaller and more exclusive than some large academy systems, they reflect the same qualities that defined him as a player: technical excellence, sharp movement, confidence, and a love for attacking football. By sharing his experience with young players in a hands-on environment, Owen continues to shape how aspiring athletes learn the game, adding a mentoring legacy to the reputation he built as one of England's most recognizable forwards. ▣

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